

How Does Jesus Save?

The Importance of The Blood of Christ

How To Read This Article

Because of the crucial nature of this subject — how Jesus saves — all Bible citations are immediately followed (in separate italicized paragraphs) by the passages referred to. Read each paragraph and then read the verses quoted. Make sure you investigate each passage in its context to see that it is properly applied.

Outline of Article

1. Salvation Comes By The Blood of Christ
2. Christ's Blood Is In Christ's Body
3. Salvation, The Forgiveness, of Sins, Is In Christ's Body
4. The Body of Christ Is The Church of Christ
5. Salvation (Forgiveness Of Sins) Is In Christ's Church
6. Whatever Takes Us Into Christ's Church Brings Us To Christ's Blood, Which Saves Us
7. Baptism Takes Us Into The Church, Christ's Body

Introduction

Perhaps you have seen bumper stickers on cars which say “JESUS SAVES.” I have seen quite a few of them, and each time I see one I wonder: “*Does the person in that car really understand how Jesus saves?*”

Yes, it is true that Jesus saves. Matthew 1:21 informs us that his very name was given because he would save his people from their sins. But there is so much more to understand than just knowing that Jesus saves. It is also of great importance to answer the question: *How does Jesus save?*

Cited Verses

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

Does he save us just because we follow the religion of our parents? Does he save us because of our own goodness? Does he save us in some way apart from a knowledge of the Bible, His revealed word? The answer to all of these is simple: *No*. Jesus does not save us in these ways.

The Bible, our only authority in religious matters (Colossians 3:17), tells us exactly *how* it is that Jesus saves. If you will take a few moments of your time to read the following message, and compare it to what the Bible says by reading the passages that are given, you can know *how* it is that Jesus saves.

Cited Verses

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17

1. Salvation Comes By The Blood of Christ

The Bible teaches that, though there are many contributing factors (i.e., faith, grace, hope, obedience, etc.), the *exact* means by which Jesus saves is his **blood**. The importance of salvation by blood is set forth in many passages throughout the Bible. Examine the following principles by looking up the passages mentioned.

A. *Life is in the blood.* In the Old Testament we learn that “life” is, in some way, “in” the blood. This is taught in Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11,14 and Deuteronomy 12:23.

Cited Verses

“But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.” Genesis 9:4

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” “Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.’ “Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; “for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’ ” Leviticus 17:11-14

“Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life; you may not eat the life with the meat.” Deuteronomy 12:23.

B. *Without blood, there is no remission (or forgiveness) of sins.* In God’s great plan to save man, blood plays a central role. From the first sacrifices in Eden forward, blood was involved in atoning for man’s sins. Read Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22.

Cited Verses

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11

“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Hebrews 9:22

C. *Blood was used under the law of Moses for the forgiveness of sins.* The Jews, under the Old Testament law of Moses, were forgiven of their sins when the priests used the blood of animal sacrifices in the temple. Look at these verses: Exodus 12:7-23; 24:6-8; 30:10; Leviticus 4:5-6, 17. Blood was used in almost every Old Testament sacrifice [Note: Some “sacrifices,” such as grain offerings, were bloodless.]

Cited Verses

“And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’S Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. `Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. `Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat--that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first

day of the month at evening. `For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.” Exodus 12:7-23

“And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.” Exodus 24:6-8

“And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.” Exodus 30:10

“Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull’s blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary.” Leviticus 4:5,6

“Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil.” Leviticus 4:17

D. Under the New Testament the blood of Christ, not the blood of bulls and goats, brings forgiveness. See Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Romans 3:24-25; 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12-14; 10:19-29; 12:24; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2, 18-19; 1 John 1:7; 5:6; Revelation 1:5; 7:14; 12:11. (see also John 6:53ff; 1 Corinthians 10:16)

Cited Verses

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28

And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.” Mark 14:24

Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” Luke 22:20

“being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,” Romans 3:24,25

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Romans 5:9

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” Ephesians 1:7

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13

“in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:14

“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:12-14

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” Hebrews 10:19-29

“to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Hebrews 12:24.

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” Hebrews 13:12.

“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” 1 Peter 1:2.

“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18,19.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

“This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.” 1 John 5:6.

“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” Revelation 1:5.

“And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7:14.

““And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Revelation 12:11.

“Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” John 6:53.

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” 1 Corinthians 10:16.

2. Christ’s Blood Is In Christ’s Body

The blood of Jesus is *“in Christ.”* While Jesus was alive on earth, his physical blood was in his physical body. John 19:34 shows us that blood came out of His body when it was pierced with a spear. Jesus does not live on the earth today, but his blood which was shed at the cross cleanses his *“spiritual body,”* the church (see point #4 below). Ephesians 2:13-16 teaches that Jews and Gentiles were made one, and forgiven of their sins, by the blood of Christ *“in one body.”* The saving power of Jesus’ blood, therefore, is in the spiritual body of Christ.

Cited Verses

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” John 19:34

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Ephesians 2:13-16

3. Salvation, The Forgiveness, of Sins, Is In Christ’s Body

A. If the forgiveness of sins comes by the blood of Christ, and if the blood of Christ is in the spiritual body of Christ, then the forgiveness of sins must be in Christ’s spiritual body.

B. We have already noted that forgiveness of sins comes by Jesus’ blood (#1). And, we have seen that the blood of Jesus is in His spiritual body (#2). We can only conclude, then, that in some way the forgiveness of sins is *in Christ’s* spiritual body. When we examine the Bible we see that this is exactly what the scriptures teach. Ephesians 1:3 says that all spiritual blessings are *“in Christ,”* that is in Christ’s body. In the following verses we see a list of blessings that are in Christ: being chosen (vs.4), God’s grace and acceptance (vs.6), redemption and forgiveness of sins (vs.7), spiritual unity (vs.10), an inheritance (vs.11), praise and trust (vs.12), and the Spirit of God (vs.13). Note that all of these blessings, including the forgiveness of sins, are *“in Christ.”* [Read all of Ephesians chapter one for more examples.]

Cited Verses

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” Ephesians 1:3

4. The Body of Christ Is The Church of Christ

A. The one spiritual body Paul spoke of in Ephesians is *the church,* the body of Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

B. The Bible plainly teaches that Christ is the head of this church. Read Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10, 19; and Hebrews 3:3-6 (where the church is called a *“house”*) to learn this.

Cited Verses

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:22,23

“but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--” Ephesians 4:15

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Ephesians 5:22-23

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18

“and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:10

“and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.” Colossians 2:19

“For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” Hebrews 3:3-6

C. But the Bible also teaches that Christ, who is the head of the church, is also the head of the body. Why? Because the body of Christ and the church of Christ are the same thing. Study again Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:22-23; and Colossians 1:18-24 to see the connection between the body of Christ and the church of Christ. These passages teach that they are the same spiritual institution.

Cited Verses

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:22,23

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;” Ephesians 4:4

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Ephesians 5:22-23

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,” Colossians 1:18-24

5. Salvation (Forgiveness Of Sins) Is In Christ’s Church

A. If forgiveness of sins is by Christ’s blood (point #1), and if the blood of Christ is in Christ’s spiritual body (point #2), and if forgiveness of sins is in the spiritual body of Christ (point #3), and if the spiritual body of Christ is the church of Christ (point #4), then the forgiveness of sins (salvation) is in Christ’s church.

B. This is not to say that the church saves ... it does not! Christ's blood is where the actual power of salvation lies, but Christ, through his blood, only saves those who are in His church, His body (See Acts 2:47). Thus, Christ's church is the body of saved people.

Cited Verses

"praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47

C. Christians, those people saved by the blood of Christ, are members of Christ's church, which is His body. They are: (1) justified (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Acts 13:39); (2) redeemed (Galatians 3:13; 4:5; 1 Peter 1:18; Titus 2:14); (3) sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Romans 15:16); and (4) new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1ff). All of these terms indicate that Christians are forgiven of their sins. They are saved.

Cited Verses

"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:" 1 Corinthians 1:2

"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:11

"and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:39

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")," Galatians 3:13

"to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." Galatians 4:5

"knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers," 1 Peter 1:18

"who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:14

"that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:16

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." Colossians 3:1

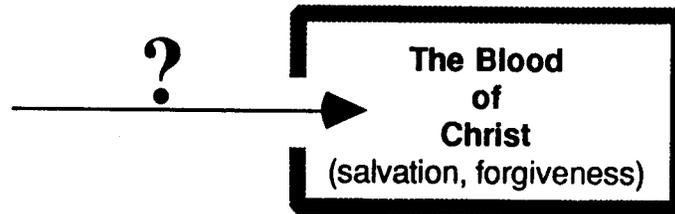
D. Ephesians 5:23 says: "...Christ is the head of the church; and He is the savior of the body." Because the body and the church are two different terms for the same institution, this verse could just as well say "Christ is the head of the body; and he is the savior of the body." Read again Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18, 24 cited above.

Cited Verses

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body." Ephesians 5:23

6. Whatever Takes Us Into Christ's Church (His Body) Brings Us To Christ's Blood, Which Saves Us

If the forgiveness of sins is by Christ's blood (point #1), and if Christ's blood is in his body — and only effective there (point #2), then salvation is in Christ's body (point #3); and if his spiritual body is the church (point #4), then salvation (the forgiveness of sins) must be in his church (point #5), then whatever takes us into Christ's body (His church), also brings us to the blood of Christ, the exact means by which we are forgiven of our sins. It is absolutely imperative that we learn exactly what it is that accomplishes this process.



*The rectangle represents Christ's church, which is Christ's spiritual body.
Christ's blood, which saves, is in that body.*

7. Baptism Takes Us Into The Church, Christ's Body

Baptism puts us into a state of salvation, because salvation (the forgiveness of sins) is in Christ's body, the church, where the cleansing blood of Christ is. Note the following chart, and the explanation which follows.



Does this mean that water saves us, that water brings forgiveness? No, the Bible does not teach that. But saying that baptism adds us to the body of Christ is not a claim to salvation by water. What is baptism then?

Like repentance and confession, baptism is an act of faithful obedience to Jesus the Christ. Christ commanded both faith and repentance. But Jesus also commanded baptism (see John 8:24; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44ff). Jesus instructed that *faith, repentance and baptism* be preached by the apostles. When you read the book of Acts you will see that the message of faith, repentance *and* baptism was preached.

Cited Verses

“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” John 8:24

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:15,16

“and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:47

Faith is, of course, necessary, but *by itself it does not save* (John 1:12; 8:31, 44; 12:42; James 2:19). Faith is a step in the process of salvation. It is a step in the direction of salvation, but it does not take us “into” a state of salvation (Romans 10:10).

Cited Verses

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:” John 1:12 [Note: This passage does not say that having faith equals becoming a child of God. It says that those who have faith have the right, the authority, to become a child of God. Faith is a step in the right direction — not the whole journey.]

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” John 8:31 ... “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44 [Those who believed on Jesus in verse 31 are the same ones Jesus accused of having the devil for their father. How could believers in Christ be children of the devil? They were the devil’s children because their faith was incomplete. They were *unwilling to do all* that obedient faith demanded. See the next verse.]

“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;” John 12:42 [Note - These religious leaders *believed* in Christ, but they failed - *continually* - to confess the Christ. Matthew 10:32-33 states that our refusal to confess Christ yields a refusal on His part to confess us before the Father.]

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 10:32,33

“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:10 [Note - This passage teaches that faith leads to righteousness and that confession leads to salvation. Question - are these two independent processes that lead to salvation? Can one be saved by their faith without confession that Jesus is the Christ? (Remember Matthew 10:32-33.) Can one be saved by their confession of Christ ... without faith? (See Acts 19:13-14 - the sons of Sceva called on the name of Christ, yet they had no faith in Christ.) It is obvious that both faith and confession are each part of the singular process that leads to salvation. (In this regard, consider Romans 5:1-9. Here faith justifies (vs 1), but so does the blood of Christ (vs 9). Surely both function co-operatively in the same process rather than independently.)]

“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”” Acts 19:13-15

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!” James 2:19

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” Romans 5:1 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Romans 5:9

Repentance is also necessary, but it can not save alone. It is a step in the direction of salvation, but it does not actually take us “into” a state of salvation (Acts 11:18).

Cited Verses

“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”” Acts 11:18 [Note - The comments relative to Romans 10:9-10 apply here. Repentance does not save by itself. It is, however, part of the singular process that does.]

Confession, too, is needed, but by itself it does not save. It is another step in the direction of salvation, but it does not take us into a state of salvation (Romans 10:10 - see citation and previous discussion.)

Baptism, however, though it does not save without the proper conditions of faith, repentance and confession before it, is the *final step of faith* that takes us “into Christ” and His church. Read carefully Romans 6:1-4 and Galatians 3:24-29 and you will see that these passages teach us that baptism is “into Christ Jesus,” “into His death,” and “into Christ.” Galatians 3 also tells us that through baptism we “put on Christ.” 1 Corinthians 12:13 informs us that the Holy Spirit, by means of baptism, puts us into the body (the church) of Christ. Colossians 2:11ff affirms that it is by means of baptism that we put off the sins of the flesh, are buried with Christ and by which we are raised with him through faith, specifically a faith in the “operation of God.” In this regard it is similar to Romans 6:1-4.

Nothing else in the Bible is described as doing this ... only baptism. Only through the faith demonstrated in the act of baptism are we added to Christ’s body, wherein is Christ’s blood which saves us from our sins.

Cited Verses

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:1-4

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:24-29

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:13

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” Colossians 2:11-13

Baptism is the culminating act of faith that adds us to, and takes us into, the body of Christ. Prior to baptism a soul is *outside* the of body Christ. Subsequent to baptism a soul *is in the body of Christ*. This is the thrust of Romans 6:17-18.

Cited Verses

“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” Romans 6:17,18

Before baptism a soul is *enslaved* to sin. After baptism a soul has been set *free* from sin. The *dividing line* is key to understanding this passage. Even though the term baptism is not explicitly mentioned here, it is implicit. How so? Observe the following.

Paul said that when a soul “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered ...,” that soul was “set free from sin.” (Romans 7:17 already cited) What was the doctrine they heard? Romans 1:16 clearly declares it to be the *gospel* of Christ. It is *within* the gospel message that we find God’s plan of righteousness (Romans 1:17).

Cited Verses

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”” Romans 1:16,17

Note also, that Paul said that the doctrine they heard, the gospel, was to be *obeyed*. The gospel is not just for hearing. Inherent in the message are commands that must be followed. More specifically, the gospel, when heard and obeyed in all of its details, is said to *save* lost souls. Nowhere is this more forcefully taught than in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Cited Verses

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,” 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

The gospel Paul preached to the Corinthians was *received*. The Corinthian Christians were *standing* in that gospel. They were *saved* by that gospel, if they *continued to hold fast* (persist in obedience) the message that was proclaimed to them.

Paul continues to observe three critical aspects of the gospel that tie together the life and death of Christ with our own obedience to that gospel message.

Christ died for our sins. Christ was buried. And Christ rose again.

In the likeness of Christ’s death, we die to sin (read Romans 6:1-4 again). In the likeness of Christ’s burial, we are buried with him in baptism (read Romans 6:1-4 again). And, in likeness to the resurrection of Christ, we rise from baptism to serve Christ in newness of life (see both Romans 6:1-4 and Colossians 2:11ff).

The parallel that exists between Christ’s “obedience” (see Romans 5:18-19) and our own is *more than coincidental ... and more than symbolic*. It exists by design. We can no more become children of God without death to sin, burial in baptism and rising to walk in newness of life, than Jesus could have become both Lord and Christ without his death, burial and resurrection. In his stirring message of truth on the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly expressed this truth: God made Jesus both Lord and Christ *following, and because of*, his resurrection.

Cited Verses

“Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” Romans 5:18,19 [Note - Verse 18 of Romans 5 speaks of Christ’s death as a “righteous act.” Verse 19 speaks of Christ’s death as “one Man’s obedience.” Righteousness and obedience are always tied together. That was true for Christ ... it is just as true for us. See the example of Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1:6]

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” Luke 1:6 [Note - Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous and blameless because they

did what God said they must do. Their obedience by itself did not save them. God kept his word to hold them righteous and blameless when they followed that word.]

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36 [Note - “God has made this Jesus ... both Lord and Christ.” This powerful declaration of Christ’s role in God’s plan is made immediately after concluding a series of arguments in which Jesus was proven to be the Messiah by means of his life, teachings and miracles, as well as by showing that He — and He alone — was the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. His crucifixion - His resurrection - His ascension - His exaltation to the right hand of God - the miraculous demonstration of the Holy Spirit in the speech of the apostles and the obvious fulfillment of old testament Messianic prophecies — all *proved conclusively* what Jesus *did* and thus, *who* He was. Because Jesus did what He came to do — completing his eternal goal by means of His death, burial and resurrection — God “made” him Lord and Christ.]

The thrust of this line of argumentation is highly significant. Could Jesus have become both Lord and Christ if He, at any point in His life, failed to comply with the will of the Father? No.

Can we, if we fail to comply with the will of the Father, become His children? Can we leave off some command of God and still expect God to count us as righteous? No.

In large measure, Jesus demonstrated obedience to the will of God in His own life — first, to manifest His own sinless perfection (Hebrews 4:15), but second, to show us how we should follow in His steps.

Cited Verses

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15

He was baptized of John, not because He was a sinner in need of repentance and cleansing, but rather because He sought to fulfill all righteousness. (Matthew 3:15)

Cited Verses

“But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.” Matthew 3:15

He suffered and died to become the sacrifice for our sins, but also to show us how we must likewise be willing to suffer.

Cited Verses

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:” 1 Peter 2:21

Though he was a Son, He demonstrated submission to the will of the Father by keeping the Father’s word and will. And in so doing, he became the author of salvation to those who willingly follow His example of obedience. (Hebrews 5:8-9)

Cited Verses

“though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,” Hebrews 5:8,9

Clearly, baptism is a command of God. It is a command of God so connected with God’s singular plan of redemption that *there is no plan without its inclusion*. Baptism is not a sacramental act that, by itself, takes sin away. It is, as noted earlier, the culminating act of a *process* ordained of God that *does* take sin away. Peter affirmed its role in 1 Peter 3:20-21.

Cited Verses

“who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter 3:20,21

The flood of Noah prefigured, or typified, our salvation which is completed in baptism. Baptism does not remove literal dirt from our bodies, says Peter, but it does complete the process by which we appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Christ. Through our own death, burial and resurrection completed in baptism, we make Christ's resurrection effective in removing sin from our souls. In this way we appeal to God for forgiveness — and God, because He has promised to do so, forgives us of our sins.

It is for this reason Peter taught repentance and baptism on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), and that around three thousand souls were baptized in faithful obedience to that instruction (Acts 2:41). When the Samaritans heard the preaching of Philip concerning the kingdom of God, they too were baptized into Christ (Acts 8:12). So was Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:13). And the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:36, 38). And Paul (Acts 9:18; 22:16). And Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:47-48). And Lydia and her household (Acts 16:15). And the Philippian jailor and his household (Acts 16:33). And the Corinthians (Acts 18:8). And the Ephesians (Acts 19:4-5). There are no examples of souls saved from sin in the book of Acts, or anywhere in the new testament from Pentecost on, except that they were baptized into Christ.

Cited Verses

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Acts 8:12-13

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ... And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. Acts 8:36 , 38

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Acts 9:18 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Acts 22:16

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. Acts 10:47-48

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. Acts 16:15

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. Acts 16:33

And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Acts 18:8

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. Acts 19:4

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:5

CONCLUSION

To be saved, we must be washed by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5; 7:14). But we cannot be washed by the blood of Christ unless, and until, we are added by God to His church, His body (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22-23). This is simply because Christ's blood is "in" his body, the church. And, we cannot be added by God to His Son's body, the church, until we, like those on Pentecost, are added by our obedient and faithful submission to God's will by means of baptism (Acts 2:38-41)

Cited Verses

"and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood," Revelation 1:5

"And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14

"praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47

"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:22,23

"Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." Acts 2:38-41

We encourage you to read and study these scriptures as you consider your obedience to Christ (Acts 17:11).

Verses Cited

"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." Acts 17:11

If you believe that salvation occurs only because Christ died and shed his blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28), then you must ask your self the question we have sought to answer: How does Jesus save? How does the blood of Christ cleanse your soul from sin? If you disagree with the conclusion/s shown here, then you must explain "where" the blood of Christ is today, and "how" the blood of Christ actually removes sin.

Verses Cited

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:28

It is our hope and prayer that you will study the word of God and come to the conclusion that God has so clearly set forth. We stand ready and willing to answer any questions that you might have.

[Direct all questions to admin@TheBible.net]